

CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY ISSUES IN ESL LEARNING TO PAKISTANI UNIVERSITY STUDENTS: WORLD ENGLISH PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

The current article deals with the difficulties related to the cultural and linguistic diversity in ESL instructions in the Pakistani Universities. Using a framework that focuses on the influences on learning, the educational experiences of learners from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds are examined. We know that diversity is influencing everything and education is not out of that frame. The ESL teachers must be familiar with the current and upcoming changes in the socio-cultural firmament and linguistic patterns. In order to positively influence the academic success and learning processes of English second language learners, they must be educated, skilled in various areas of language coaching, as well as aware of the sociopolitical issues surrounding them and their own personal sociocultural consciousness (Greenfield, 2013). However, it is now strongly advised that more focus be given to cultural material besides other forms of diversity, cultural diversity is a crucial aspect of the acquisition process (Abu-Alyan, 2011). This essay focuses on how variation and its challenges are evident in the speech, learners' level, cultural, and educational institutions themselves in ESL learning nations. Diversity does not exist without challenges. It resulted in the issues of modification, verbal placement, agreement, and pronoun placement for which teachers can play a good role to use multiple strategies to overcome these errors of ESL learners in Pakistan.

Key words: ESL, Lexical diversity, linguistic effects, Syntactic variation, cultural change, Error analysis.

1.1. Introduction

We live in a world where diversity is rampant, it can be found everywhere. It is considered an asset (Bender, Beller, & Nersessian, 2015) and a liability (Mease, & Collins, 2018) simultaneously in relevant literature. It has many kinds like it can be based on cultural factors (Foley, & Mirazon Lahr, 2011) or based on the language adopted (Giunchiglia, Batsuren, & Bella, 2017). Yet, in any case it influences the learners. Language learners are influenced by every kind of diversity that means they have to face multiple issues that can either hinder their progress of language learning or help them pacing forward in their learning endeavor. It can help them in their learning if they belong to same culture because in that case, they are used to live in the same culture, hence, practically no effect of cultural diversity on them except from the peers (Taylor & Whittaker, 2009). Perez (1998) considered those students culturally diverse who are different ethnically, or socially, and dealing with them in a language class is a challenging task for the language teacher (Terry & Irving, 2010) even in an era of technology.

We are living in a world which is gradually squeezing since the inception of internet, we have become netizens (Hauben, 1995) where we can be in touch virtually with anyone in the world. Research with the effect of technology has reached in the far nook of the world and we can be aware with the international research too. Huttenlocher et al., (2010) said that children from poverty rid areas are unbecoming of hearing complex structure and diverse words, which means their language learning needs a lot of improvement when they got entered in a language classroom. That is why, it was said that environment has a lot of effect on language development

and ultimately leads to their successes in academic performances (Morgan et al., 2015; Dickinson et al., 2010).

Culture and language are intertwined and mutually influencing. Language is used in daily conversation to meet the needs of the contexts, where everyone speaks the same language. That sameness of the language checks the development and limits people's ability to communicate through language (Kaplan, 1966; Lakoff & Johnson, 2003; Ogden & Richards, 1927; Whorf, 1940). Previous studies have focused on helping students develop their English language, particularly in the context of their academic language (Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2000). The empirical gap persists, although few studies have attempted to examine how teachers understand and deal with the complexity of language culture or how they help ESL students overcome language barriers related to the limitations of culture on their second language development in a multicultural context.

Looking into the importance of English, the current research aims to describe how culture and language are inextricably linked as well as to make recommendations for how to implement instructional strategies for teaching second language through cultural practices to enhance students' linguistic comprehension. People from all over the globe from many cultural origins and speak many different languages. Although at first glance language and culture seem to be two separate subjects, they truly have a close connection and mutually influence one another. According to Gleason (1961), languages are not just the byproducts of cultures; they are also their emblems. Language typically contains explicit linguistic codes that reflect cultural norms and cognitive tendencies, which often affects how a language develops in relation to its related culture.

Pakistan is a plurilingual and multicultural country and our classrooms are showing the same diversity in languages and cultures, which means language learning will be impacted due to these variables. Here in Pakistan, English language has attained the status of official and second language simultaneously (Abbas, Pervaiz, & Arshad, 2018) along with Urdu which was already considered as a national language. Looking into the perspective of job scenario related with English (Haider & Fang, 2019) and its prestige in the society (Abbas, & Iqbal, 2018), university students are putting their efforts to master English language (Rasool, & Winke, 2019; Abbas et al., 2021). For the university students, English language has become the passport to get jobs in other countries which is one of the reasons of their turning toward learning English language (Haider, 2019)

1.2. Diversity

The diversity of languages in many non-English speaking countries is a major barrier to the teaching of English as a secondary or foreign language. We can take an example of Arabic, which has so many unique characteristics, that is why, their speakers have a hard time learning English (Abdo & Breen, 2010). This makes it challenging to help Pakistani students to become fluent in English, unlike other Indo-European languages like Italian or Spanish that share syntactic similarities with English, Urdu is entirely different from English in terms of syntax and orthography (Saboor & Khan, 2010; Rafi, 2013; Azeem et al., 2020). The purpose of Abdo and Breen's study (2010), which involved 120 university students, was to determine which pedagogical techniques helped Jordanian EFL students learn English in an efficient way. The study's findings revealed many tactics to aid in improved learning.

1.2.1. Cultural Diversity

EFL teachers have seen that students' cultural upbringings do have a significant impact on how quickly they learn English. Studies show that when students have access to learning sources that

are significant culturally, their comprehension is higher than when they do not. 40 students from culturally diverse backgrounds in Pakistan (Rural, Urban) were examined using reading materials written in English that included both culturally similar and culturally distinct content in a study by Yousef, Karimi, and Janfeshan (2014). The results were inconsistent between the two groups, indicating that on average the study subjects scored worse on the tasks that were culturally foreign to them than on the assessments that were similar to their culture.

1.2.2. Diverse Learner Level

Diverse learning levels in the same classroom and the impact they have on everyone's learning, as well as how certain teachers support certain learning styles while others do not, are all examples of different levels of learners. The latter is crucial because it explains why individuals whose first language is supported in class by the professors make more progress with their English than those whose first language is generally disregarded. It is consistent with previous research by Abdo & Breen (2010), who noted that mostly Pakistani English classrooms have a wide variety of linguistic competence and that specific English learners' readiness levels for learning the target language are rarely assessed. The learner is challenged with a hurdle in that the aptitude of each individual learner is not taken into consideration. Diluzio (2011) stated that it was practically challenging to meet students' requests in a multilevel EFL classroom and that it was important to consider each student's talents in a basic adult EFL higher institutions. Teaching more than two different language competency levels in one classroom presented issues because the readings and course materials might not be adequate for a class with so many levels. She used a task-based lesson plan to successfully educate her multilevel classroom. She provided a number of approaches and suggestions, including condensing lectures and using limited vocabulary and grammar (Diluzio, 2011).

1.3. Research Objectives

1. To determine how cultural variety affects learning a second language.
2. To determine how linguistic diversity affects the acquisition of second languages.

1.4. Methodology

Focusing on the mistakes that students make while learning a second language is possible through error analysis. The primary difference between the error and mistake is that mistake, observed during the language performance, can be corrected, whereas error is something which can neither be avoided nor be corrected by second language learners themselves. The chances of existence of errors in English as second language learning increases as compared to the first language learning or mother tongue. The reason behind it is learning first language is not influenced by other languages but learning second language is largely influenced by the first language and various other socio-cultural factors. Precisely, error is something which occurs unconsciously during the usage of second language. Elis in. Novita (2014) says that error is systematically done by the students who have not comprehend the rules of the chosen language. Errors are also predictable and systematic. Jabeen, Bharam and Muhammad (2015) wrote that error is the student's inability to learn the language, errors cannot be self-corrected. According to Dulay, Burt, and Krashen (1982:138), "making error is an inescapable aspect of learning, humans cannot acquire language without systematically doing errors." So, errors are something that cannot be avoided by students while learning a second language. An error analysis framework typically comprises the steps that follow (Gass & Selinker, 2008): collection of data (often by assembling learner corpora and comparing them over time), identification of errors (types of errors; quantify error, and analyze its source (interference or developmental error, etc.),

description of errors (structural level, general linguistic errors etc.), explanation of errors (inter linguistic errors and intra linguistic errors) and error remediation.

1.5. Data Analysis

The table shows the data of 40 BS students gathered through their answer scripts under two main classifications and 06 parameters. Lexical Variations and Syntactic Variations are governing classifications which are further divided among 6 parameters.

1.5.1. Lexical Variations

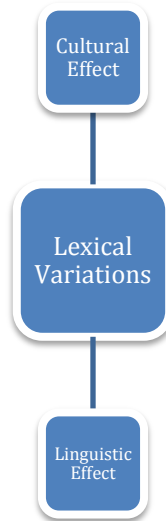


Figure 1

Lexical Variations suggest that what kind of change is there due to cultural effects or linguistic effect.

The sociolinguistic backgrounds of the students varied greatly. They are all fluent in Urdu as it is their first language and they lack in English. For all such reasons, the students misspelled the words in the researched data as shared. However, because of the way they learned English, their level of English language proficiency differs. Such variation in vocabulary according to one's own culture or here Pakistani culture is the result of multiple cultural factors like language contact, issues of pronunciation, level or standard of education, economic standing of the country and various other factors.

The words shared above are impacted by the pronunciation of Punjabi speaking ESL learners, moreover less exposure of rural areas colleges and universities to English language. Like "Clauses" are written as "Closses" which means they (students) pronounce 'clause' as 'close'. Similar is the case in the example of "Beliefs" as in many areas beliefs in pronounced with less stress on "be-liefs" that is why it's written as "bliefs" such impacts can be clearly seen in the wrong spellings of the words. Similar is the case with rest of the lexical variants. That's why Holmes (2001:127) states "People frequently use language to indicate their membership in specific groups and to assemble various facets of their personal group. In many societies, social position, gender, age, culture, and the forms of social networks toward which people belong turn to be significant features of identity."

For instance, English was taught to Chinese writers as an optional subject in their school system, whereas English was taught to Pakistani writers as a second language and plays a significant role in that country's culture. The English language has been integral to the culture of Pakistan since its founding in 1947 (Kachru, 2005). It is employed in relation to politics, business, economics,

the media, science, and technology. At the level of trade and commerce, English is the language of communication (Tahir, 2004).

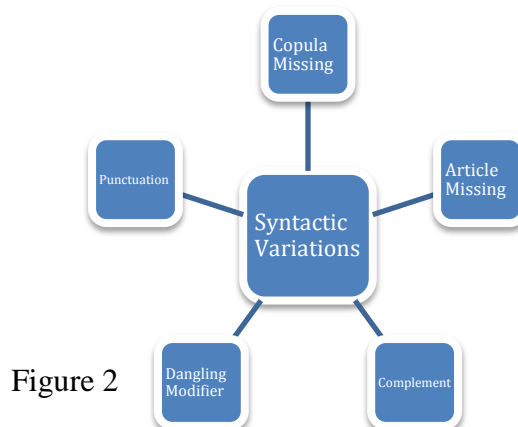
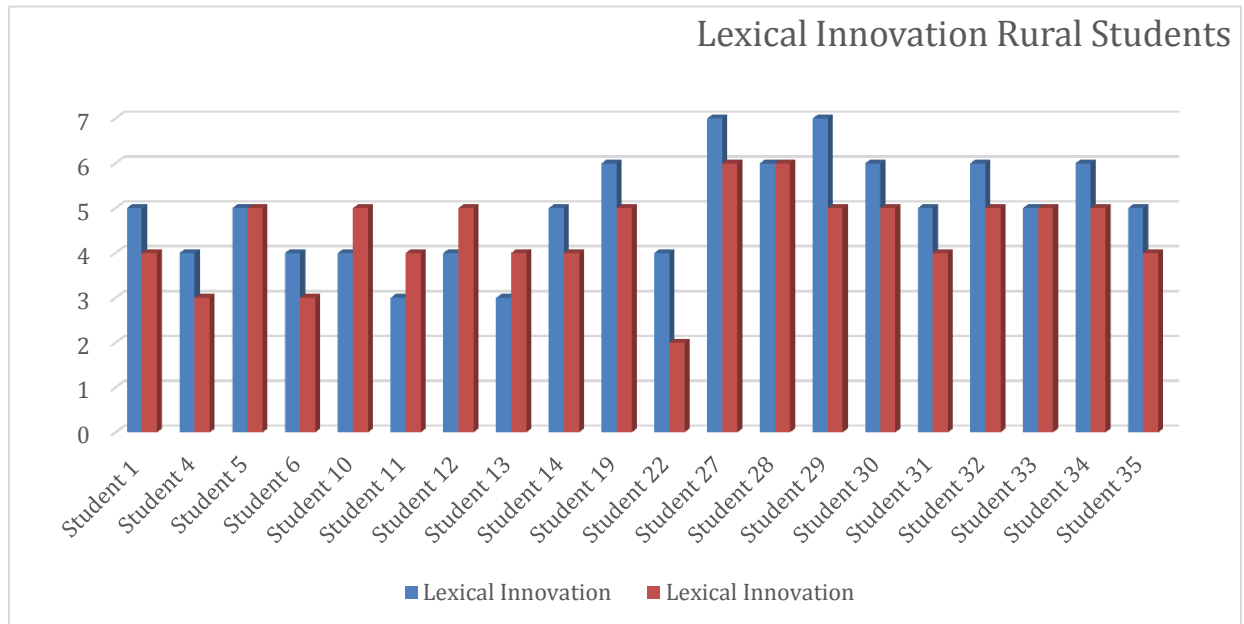
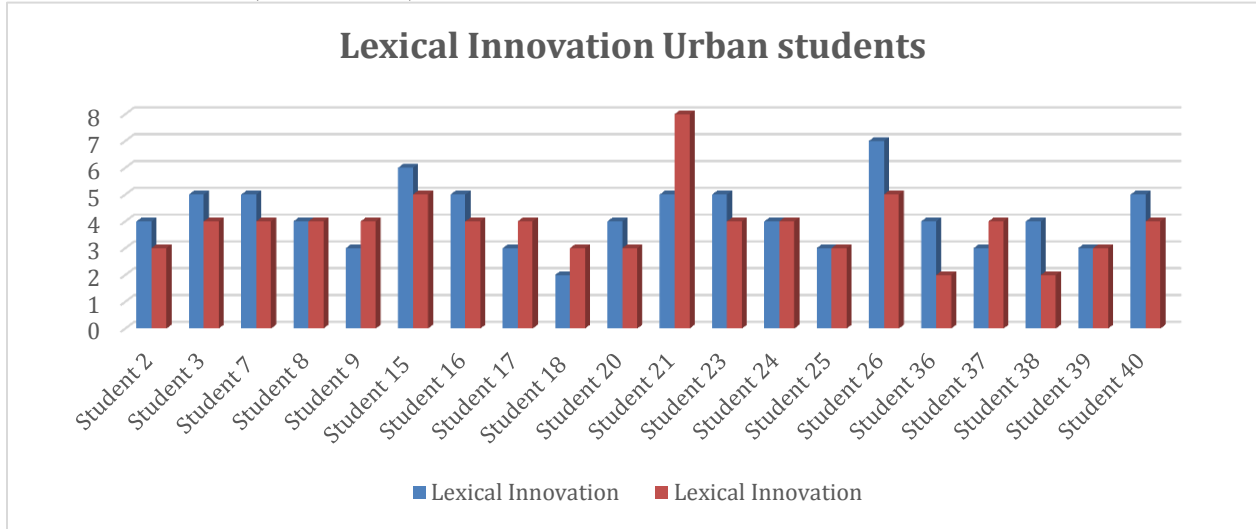
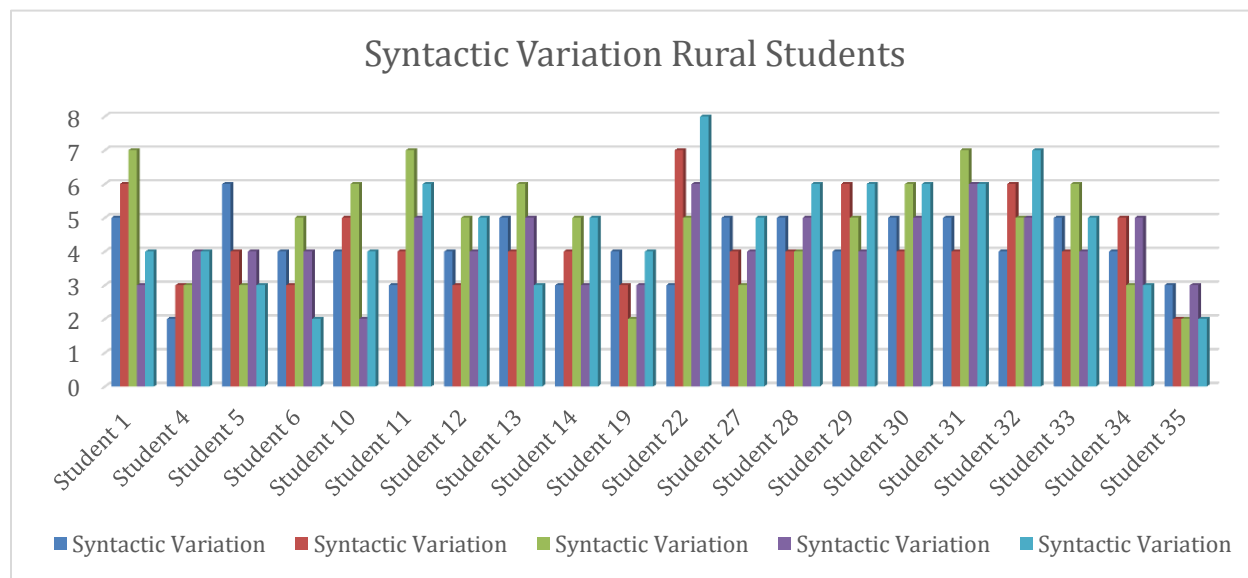


Figure 2

Model to Analyze cultural and linguistic diversity

Syntactic variations suggest what kind of variations are found in the scripts that include mistakes of copula missing, punctuation, dangling modifier, complement and article missing.



modifiers with dangling clauses are called dangling modifiers, the text is written in a way that makes it unclear whether it is modifying anything or not. This can create confusion or make a sentence difficult to understand. Jummaa (2013) states that English has a problem with dangling modifiers, a problem that is perplexing to many people. The term "dangling modifier" refers to a word or phrase that modifies a term that is not explicitly expressed in the sentence. Adding a modifier provides additional information, clarification, or description.

Here is an example of a sentence from the collected data with a dangling modifier:

"Walking to the store, the ice cream melted."

In this sentence, it is not clear who was walking to the store. Was it the ice cream that was walking? Or was it a person who was walking and carrying the ice cream?

To correct this sentence, one would need to specify who was doing the action described by the modifier. Here is one way to rewrite the sentence to eliminate the dangling modifier:

"As I was walking to the store, the ice cream melted in my hand."

This revised sentence makes it clear that it was a person who was walking to the store, and that the ice cream was melting in their hand.

A dangling modifier is used in the sentence "Heading in that direction, a magnificent school building appeared" (Merriam Webster, 1995). A modifying phrase It's obvious that heading in that direction intended to depict the narrator's (or another observer's) actions, yet linguistically it seems to apply to the school building or to nothing in particular. In the same way, the modifier "At the young age, my family suddenly adopted a dog" also "dangles" in the statement "My family suddenly adopted a dog," referring to neither a specific person nor thing (Wilson and Glazier, 2008:134).

1.5.4. Articles missing

Article missing is also prominent in the scripts. Students are confused about the placement of articles. They have some sense of using "a" and "an" but when it comes to use "the", there mistake comes to the front. Most of the students have either not properly used "the" or have

excessively used it in their written constructions. The main reasons among students for not using the articles accurately lies in countability of nouns. English nouns can be split into "countable" and "uncountable" (sometimes known as "count" and "noncount") categories. Tables and kids are examples of countable nouns, but "dirt" and "knowledge" are examples of uncountable nouns that cannot be pluralized. The learner finds this variety of forms challenging. Even the word "money" is not often countable as a noun even though it is countable when it is in a wallet. Many academic disciplines use uncountable nouns in the plural, such as "knowledge" or "behaviour."

The other problem is in the identification of such words where variation of meaning exists like, like "experience," can either be countable or uncountable. (For instance, we may compare someone's "experiences" with how much "experience" they had with their "experiences" while on vacation in China using a challenging computer software program.)

Many non-native English speakers experience a third and last difficulty since some nouns can be made plural in their original languages but not in English like information is not plural in English. Once more, there is a growing inclination among native speakers to classify a noun in order to make it countable. (Quirk and Greenbaum, 1973). Pakistani students struggled with syntax greatly, yet they don't rank well when compared to other aspects of writing English (Davies, 2003). The most significant issues were difficulty over grammatical rules, a lack of vocabulary, and L1 interference.

1.5.5. Punctuation

Punctuation is another big issue with the students. Data shows that students have a lot of issues in use of proper punctuation. Their writings are not properly punctuated. Sometimes they have either excessively used punctuation remarks or mistakenly given the wrong placements. It is obvious that employing punctuation marks is a challenge for second language learners at all levels. There could be several reasons. First-language barriers, overgeneralisations of rules, and a lack of understanding of written English rules (Hussain et al., 2013)

The other identified problems are First-language barriers, huge classrooms, low motivation among students and teachers, insufficient lesson planning, ignorance of contemporary instructional and error analysis approaches, and other problems are seen as being of the utmost importance by Pakistani English teachers (Butt & Rasul, 2012). According to Moy (1996), punctuation errors are made because English teachers don't provide enough teaching materials and don't use enough teaching strategies. These reasons are other than motivation.

1.5.6. Complement

The construction includes complement errors. In grammar, a word or set of words that completes a grammatical composition: The direct object or the sentence's subject are both described by a complement, which is a component of the predicate. It is referred to as a subject complement if it alters the subject. Students are either unaware of it or know nothing about how to properly use a complement. A complement completes the meaning of a verb or adjective in a sentence. There are several different types of complements, including:

Subject complements: These follow linking verbs (such as "be," "seem," or "become") and describe or identify the subject, i.e., "Sam is a doctor." (In this clause, "a doctor" is the subject complement.)

Object complements: These follow and modify the direct object of a sentence. For example: "I painted the fence red." (In this sentence, "red" is the object complement.)

Hassan & Mahmud (2014) explains object compliment as Idiots believe she is smart (object complement realised by an adjective phrase). He was chosen by the team as captain (object complement realised by a noun phrase)

Adjective complements: These follow and modify adjectives. For example: "The pie smells delicious." (In this sentence, "delicious" is the adjective complement.)

Adverbial complements: These provide additional information about the verb in a sentence. For example: "He sings beautifully." (In this sentence, "beautifully" is the adverbial complement.)

According to Biber (1988), place adverbs frequently make direct references to the physical setting of the text or, in the case of fiction, to the internal physical world of the text. They also relate to a text's logical relationships and are crucial to how that text should be interpreted.

Biber et al. (1999), Eastwood (1994 and 2005), and Quirk et al. (1985) have all observed the trends in verb complement usage in English.

Copular verb

Ali (subject) is (verb) a smart boy (nom. Clause).

Intransitive verb

Children (subject) play (verb).

Monotransitive

Someone (subject) broke (verb) the window.

Complex-transitive verb

Students (subject) consider (verb) me (object) hardworking (adj. Clause)

Subject + verb + Object + -ing clause

Uncle (subject) saw (verb) me (object) playing match (-ing clause)

Subject + verb + Object + -ed clause

He (subject) got (verb) documents (object) photocopied (-ed clause)

1.5.7. Copula

Copula missing is another evident mistake by the students. A copula is a word used to connect two things i.e. a form of the verb *be* connecting a subject and complement. The scripts show that most of the students don't know about connecting sentences. Their writings don't have cohesion. Cohesive ties are missing which leads to ambiguity in sentences.

A lot of mistakes are the result of cultural effects. Students tend not to forget their cultural elements which affect their second language writing. Similarly, linguistic effects also result in mistakes on the part of students at BS level.

These characteristics of copulas are demonstrated by the English example below: As the name suggests, copulas are components used to connect the predicate and the subject. They are also semantically light and may even be empty. Copulas contain verbal inflection; they exist in circumstances when the predicate is nonverbal; these are elements used to join the predicate and the subject.

Example is **John is sick**

As a result, copulas should be inflected to reflect any morphological characters that verbs in a language exhibit (such as tense, number, aspect, and person, gender, etc.). Predicating the adjective sick from the referring expression John would be equivalent to writing: lx[sick'(x)] (j). Copulas are unable to independently define a predicate (*John is). Copulas are also required so that the adjective can specify the predicate (*John sick). However, all of these basic characteristics are arguable, and there is significant cross-linguistic diversity and analytical disagreement regarding them. Arche, Fábregas, & Marín,(2019).

What are the characteristics that define copulas? is a key question in typological studies (Stassen 1997 and Pustet 2003). The definitions frequently given on the grounds of Romance languages and English are both too restricted and too wide, according to the majority of the recommendations that have been made.

1.6. Findings

The research collected data from two groups urban and Rural. There were 20 students from BS level, each from two universities in which one was situated in rural area and the other was working in an urban area. The types of errors were present in two main categories: lexical and syntactic variations. The result of the most existing errors made by participants are as follows: In lexical variations, 18% of errors was produced from the cultural effect of rural students and 12.60% was the data from urban students. Other side, errors in linguistic effect was of 18.60% from rural students whereas 15% from urban students so its comparison can be drawn that the cultural effect is more on linguistic factors on rural side. In syntactic variations, the errors in dangling modifier are maximum with 29.40% while low number of errors are articles missing with 25.80%. Whereas, complement has 26.20% errors, copula with 26.40% and punctuation with 28%. Punctuation has 28% errors, Data was collected from different subject teachers of social sciences in mode of assignments. Main focus was learners' Lexical innovations, as well as Syntactic variation. We analyzed learner errors from a twofold perspective: Lexical (Cultural effects, Linguistic effects), Syntactic (copula missing, Article missing, Dangling modifiers, punctuation, and complement).

1.7. Conclusion

This article explores how culture and language are inextricably linked and to suggest ways to put culturally-based second language teaching strategies into practice and to improve students' linguistic comprehension. Learning about different cultures enables us to recognise the diversity of worldviews. Language skills gradually becoming a necessity in today's knowledge world. Kramersch (1998) asserts that being able to comprehend culture is a skill that is required when learning a second language. Learning culture and language together is vital for developing proper linguistic comprehension. Because of this, our language skills improve if we learn more cultural concepts. Writing is a sophisticated means of self-expression as well as a literacy ability. According to Mercer and Mercer (2004), it is a display of cognitive, visual, conceptual, and motor potentials. Pakistani students find writing in English challenging due to the linguistic and cultural variations. There are various ways in which Eastern and Western cultures are different that affect how people learn languages gauge. These variations could lead to grammar mistakes, composition issues, and improper idea presentation in English (Cai, 2004). The most prevalent issue that Pakistani students is translation, they struggle with translating their ideas from Urdu into English. English differs from Urdu in terms of language, lexicon, and expression. Although studies at the global scale have revealed, the most common challenge in English is about using rhetoric and grammar while writing. In Pakistani, Students had substantial rhetorical issues, but they weren't as well-ranked as compared to other writing-related factors (Davies, 2003). The most important issues were difficulty over grammatical norms, a lack of vocabulary, and interference from the L1. When students experience reading challenges, they also experience writing issues. Writing and reading are complementary skills that progress at the same time (Mubagna, 2010; Rummel, 2005)

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